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Briefing Notes for the AD/RR

Tentative Time and Place: 1000 hours 16 May 1960  
Council Room, Sheraton-Carlton Hotel

Suggested Time for Remarks: 10 to 15 minutes

Classification: ~~SECRET~~

Audience: 1. Mr. Buford, Chairman of the US Delegation and members of the US Delegation (See Tab A.)  
2. Dept. of State Personnel: Mr. Hiscoc, Chief, East-West Contacts Staff; Mr. Willis Lory, Desk Officer -- responsible for the Railroad Exchange; Mr. Martin, Briefing Officer.  
3. [REDACTED]

4. Dept. of Army Personnel: Major General Lincoln, Deputy Chief of Transportation, US Army; Earl Cox, ACNI.

Procedure: 1. Meeting will probably be opened by Mr. Buford who is chairman of the group.  
2. He will call on Mr. Hiscoc who will welcome the delegation on behalf of the Department and give some background on the Exchange Program and the importance attached to this program by the Dept. of State.  
3. Mr. Buford will then call on Major General Lincoln who may describe the organization of the Transportation Corps and point out the importance attached by each component and the Army in general to securing good information on the railroads of the U.S.R.  
4. It is expected that Mr. Buford will then call on Dr. Guthe for some remarks on the importance attached to the Exchange by the intelligence community.  
5. Following these three speeches, the AD/RR should be free to leave for it is anticipated that the Department of State -- Mr. Lory and Mr. Martin -- will then give the customary "Realities Briefing." [REDACTED] may assist with this "Briefing."  
6. Following the "Realities Briefing," it is expected that topics will be discussed somewhat in line with the agenda attached as Tab B.

Remarks by the AD/RR: Attached hereto is a draft that might be used as a basis for the remarks to be presented by the AD/RR.

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Gentlemen:

I am pleased to join with General Lincoln and Mr. Siscoe in welcoming you to Washington for consultation with the intelligence community and to have the opportunity to express my own personal wishes that your visit to the Soviet Union will be a rewarding and enjoyable experience. It is not without some feeling of envy that I talk to a group about to undertake personal travel in the USSR. As you well know, opportunities to travel in the USSR have always been limited, and for a person in my line of endeavor such opportunities are non-existent.

It is for this very reason that we in the Central Intelligence Agency attach such high importance to the entire exchange program. For in addition to its purposes in contributing to a lessening of East-West tensions and furthering the mutual understanding between Soviet and American citizens, the exchange program produces another positive benefit to the US government. This benefit is the opportunity to rely on the expertise and experienced judgment of professionals in any given field as a means of testing the validity of our own assessments of Soviet power. I cannot stress too much how important we regard this benefit.

For many years now we have been studying the Soviet state. Its open hostility to the West, its penchant for security and secrecy, and its relatively complete isolation from the non-Bloc world, however, make our task extremely difficult. As part of the Khrushchevian 'New Look' the Soviets have begun to open up and tell us a little about themselves. But we still have a long way to go, before we can feel that we really know the Russians.

High on the list of subjects about which the Soviets have always held their cards close to the chest is the Soviet rail transport system. The last visit and extended observation of Soviet railroads by an expert US railroad official was made in the early 1930's by Mr. Ralph Budd\* and it was not too long after his visit that a lid of secrecy was clamped over nearly all USSR railroad matters. The revelation of certain pertinent details of Soviet railroad practices and operations became a grave violation of State security. In the Soviet mind there was probably good reason for this.

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\* Mr. Ralph Budd is a retired president of a US railroad and is still regarded as an elder statesman in the railroad field.

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The Soviet rail transport system has always been a vital life line in holding that vast country together and in making its economic and military growth possible. This was made crystal clear to the Soviets in 1934 when the near-collapse of the Soviet rail system threatened to disrupt the country completely. Since then the satisfactory functioning of Soviet railroads has always been a matter of the greatest concern to the Soviet leadership. Under its watchful eye the Soviet rail transport system has grown into an extremely effective operating plant. Parts of the Soviet system operate with traffic densities that are extremely high in terms of Western requirements and practices. The Soviet railroads have produced impressive increases in the output of transportation service and have contributed greatly to the impressive military and economic growth of the USSR.

The information available to us now is generally consistent internally and is consistent also with other data which have been made available on Soviet economic strength and growth. We estimate that the Soviet railroads have been able to do a remarkably good job. In arriving at the estimate, however, we

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admittedly have not had the benefit of<sup>a</sup>/professional evaluation.

Because of the inability of intelligence specialists to observe railroad operations personally and to speak personally with Soviet railroad officials, your visit to the USSR acquires a major importance in serving the intelligence interests of the US government. In all probability you gentlemen will not return with reports of startling new discoveries of Soviet advances in railroading technology. But you will bring back a tempered and extremely sound professional evaluation of the Soviet railroads which will be of immeasurable value to us. Its main worth will be in providing an independent judgment with which to assess the validity of our own evaluations of the Soviet railroads. You will undoubtedly shed much light, not so much on what the Soviets have done, but more in regard to how they do it and how credible their announced claims of output are in fact. Your professional evaluation will also be of value in enabling us to make more meaningful assessments of the future course of Soviet rail transport, and its significance to Soviet military and economic power.

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In taking the time to make this arduous and expensive trip, and to be separated from your families and work, you gentlemen are performing an extremely generous and valuable service for the US government. I have been apprised of the considerable energy and resourcefulness with which you have tackled this assignment, and the unstinting cooperation you have shown the government officials concerned with this exchange. For this fine expression of service, I express my sincere gratitude and appreciation.

I hope, gentlemen, that I will be able to meet with you all upon your return and to discuss with you your experiences and observations.

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